

in the supernatant obtained after centrifuging said suspension at 7500 revolutions per minute for 30 minutes represents more than 50% of the weight of the silica present in the suspension, comprising the steps of:

(A) precipitating silica by reacting an acidifying agent with an alkali metal (M) silicate, by:

- (i) providing an initial base stock, comprising a proportion of the total amount of the alkali metal silicate introduced into the reaction, the silicate concentration expressed as SiO_2 in said base stock being lower than 20 g/l,
- (ii) adding said acidifying agent to said initial base stock until at least 5 % of the amount of M_2O present in said initial base stock is neutralized,
- (iii) adding said acidifying agent to the reaction mixture simultaneously with the remaining amount of alkali metal silicate such that the ratio (amount of silica added)/(amount of silica present in the initial base stock) is between 10 and 100;

(B) separating from the reaction mixture a precipitation cake which has a solids content of between 10 and 40%; and

(C) deagglomerating the said cake to obtain a suspension of low viscosity and wherein said deagglomerating is affected under conditions that result in a silica suspension which has a stability such that the amount of silica in the supernatant obtained after centrifuging said suspension at 7500 revolutions per minute for 30 minutes represents more than 50% of the weight of the silica initially present in the suspension.

Sub #5

39. (Three Times Amended) A method for the preparation of an aqueous suspension of precipitated silica, having solids content of between 10 and 40% by weight, which viscosity is lower than 4×10^{-2} Pa.s at a shear rate of 50 s^{-1} and wherein the amount of silica present in the supernatant obtained after centrifuging the said suspension at 7500 revolutions per minute for 30 minutes represents more than 50 % of the weight of the silica present in the suspension, comprising the steps of :

(A) precipitating silica by reacting an acidifying agent with an alkali metal (M) silicate, by:

- (i) providing an initial base stock, comprising at least a proportion of the total amount of the alkali metal silicate to be introduced into the reaction, and an electrolyte, the silicate concentration, expressed as SiO_2 in the said initial base stock being lower than 100 g/l and the electrolyte concentration in the said initial base stock being lower than 17 g/l;
- (ii) adding the acidifying agent to said base stock until a pH value of the reaction mixture of at least approximately 7 is obtained;
- (iii) when only a proportion of the silicate is provided by the initial base stock, adding simultaneously the acidifying and the remaining amount of the silicate to the reaction mixture;

(B) separating from the reaction mixture a precipitation cake which has a solids content of between 10 and 40%; and